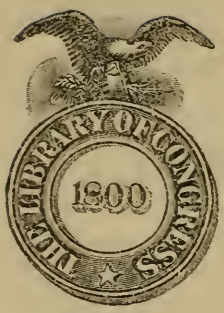
THE NAME OF OLD GLORY

POEMS OF PATRIOTISM

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY



Class PS2704
Book N3
Copyright No. 1917

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT

THE NAME OF OLD GLORY

THE NAME OF OLD GLORY

Poems of Patriotism

By

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

WITH AN APPRECIATION OF THE POET

BY

BOOTH TARKINGTON

FRONTISPIECE

BY

HOWARD CHANDLER CHRISTY

INDIANAPOLIS
THE BOBBS-MERRILL COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

Copyright 1890, 1891, 1892, 1893, 1894
1898; 1900, 1902, 1907, 1913
James Whitcomb Riley

Copyright, 1917
Estate of James Whitcomb Riley

PS2704
.N3
1917

JUN -4 1917

PRESS OF
BRAUNWORTH & CO.
BOOK MANUFACTURERS
BROOKLYN, N. Y.

©CLA432923
no 1.

CONTENTS

Mr. Riley 7
An Appreciation by Booth Tarkington

The Name of Old Glory 21
America 26
A Monument for the Soldiers 29
The Home-Voyage 31
America's Thanksgiving 33
Soldiers Here To-day 35
The Silent Victors 39
The Soldier 45
The Voice of Peace 48
The Old Man and Jim 50
Grant 53
The Quest of the Fathers 57
Liberty 60
The Drum 69
McFeeters' Fourth 72
Thoughts on the Late War 75
Decoration Day on the Place 77
A Peace-Hymn of the Republic 80
The Boy Patriot 82
A Child's Home—Long Ago 84

MR. RILEY

HAYES and Wheeler were President and Vice-President of these States when Indiana began to think and talk more about James Whitcomb Riley than about Hayes and Wheeler. The good, flat State had a poet, and her best people (that is, most of her people) knew it from the first: they realized the happiness and the beauty of the event. To great numbers of men and women who remember that discovery it is (in their memories) as if they had beheld the coming of a new and smiling brightness upon everything, like sunshine twinkling over a freshly showered landscape. Never gloomy or unfriendly people, or reserved with their emotions, the Hoosiers were happier, and showed it; they smiled oftener: they smiled whenever they spoke his name, or when they heard some one else speak it. This is not a figure of speech, or decoration, it is the literal fact, and the smiles were physical tokens. They are still there, moreover, and can be seen by any traveler to Indiana who speaks or hears spoken the name of James Whitcomb Riley. Nowadays, of course, those smiles are not Indiana's alone; they have spread to wherever there are children, or honest folk who love a poet.

In Indiana, under Hayes and Wheeler, there was a boy of eleven who had been conscious of the name of James Whitcomb Riley, for some time: conscious that this name was in the air and that a perceptible joy went with the speaking of it. He does not to this day forget the lively look, the merry fondness and prophecy of pleasure, that were in his mother's face on a summer morning when she told him that Mr. Riley was coming to the house. The boy said: "James *Whitcomb* Riley?" in excitement, though he had merely caught the contagion of pleasure with which the name was always spoken. And the mother, her eyes dancing, said *"Yes!"* as if she cried out news that was good indeed.

He came, and there was added to the boy's life a friendship, instant and perpetual. This miraculous fortune was the boy's from that day forth, and never ended. And was there ever before or since such a fairy friend for a boy? He could draw real pictures; he taught the boy to draw pictures; he played the guitar; he played the banjo, danced jigs and sang them too; he turned "cart wheels" on the front lawn in a frock coat, regardless of passers-by, and would have taught the boy to turn them if the latter had not been so much the clumsier of the two that he could never learn. He took the boy for long walks and told him of poems and stories that were in the making, seeming to consult him with interest upon points of artistry; telling him, too, of whimsical adventures and mishaps; of odd people and strange things in their lives—and of plays and

pantomimes and minstrels and circuses. Often, as the boy grew older, coming to be more a youth than a boy, the walks were by moonshine and would last till midnight, when the two would have ice-cream and pie—sometimes too much pie—at a restaurant. The friendship (except in the boy's worshipful mind) seemed to be upon a matter-of-course and democratic basis: the poet appearing to have forgotten from the first—or never to have perceived—any difference between the boy and himself in age, intelligence, reputation, or experience. Thus, one night he came to the boy's house in a state of unusual gaiety (he was almost always gayer than anybody else) over a book he was going to have published—his first book to be printed over his own name. It was to be prose, for the greater part; short stories, with poems in between; it was called *The Boss Girl,* after the title of the first story; and it must be a rare book now; worth something to a collector. That night the poet drew a design for the cover, an ink bottle mounted like a cannon and firing a charge of ink which formed, in explosion, the letters of the title. The poet seemed anxious to know how the boy liked the design; and the boy, encouraged to add something, drew an imp leaning down out of a cloud with a quill pen in his hand, the pen firing the touchhole of the ink-bottle cannon; and thus the cover was printed and that boy insufferably puffed up.

Sometimes the poet would come to the boy's house, and perhaps all afternoon and all evening

would tell the story of a book he had read: acting the scenes in it, being each character in turn, and making the thing so live that the author of it must have wept in sheer pride could he have been there. The poet would hold the eager little audience of that house—the boy's father, mother, sister, and the boy himself—sitting on the edges of their chairs by the hour; he would keep them chuckling, or send them into shouting laughter, or even bring them near to weeping; for he was an incomparable actor, the truest, realest comedian this country has known. He came to that house almost every Sunday, when he was not traveling, for many years; and afterward, though the boy was grown up and even came to be middle-aged, he was always a worshipful boy when he was with the poet. The poet always called him by his first name, while he always called the poet "Mr. Riley," and sirred him.

The truth is, and it should be told, that the poet did not like to be known as Jim Riley. Once, when the boy was about sixteen, and they were walking together, the poet, apropos of nothing that had been said, and after a silence, broke out with mighty emphasis, and to the boy's utter mystification: "I'm *not* Jim Riley! I'm *Mister* Riley!" And he was. He would sing an old-time darky song to the guitar, and finish it by dancing an intricate little step; he would cut all manner of droll capers, in mimicry; he was the very liveliest soul ever known, and the neighborliest; but those who understood him best never called him "Jim" unless they were related to him or knew

themselves part of his most intimate life. Nevertheless, it was natural that a great many people liked to think of him and speak of him as "Jim." We are so naively ready to confuse the artist with his work: people loved Joe Jefferson partly because they thought he was like Rip Van Winkle. Thus Mr. Riley seemed to them like the characters he built, common and plain and humorous and child-like and tender-hearted. So he was—yet he was also a great artist and a man of unique distinction, two facts sometimes wonderingly suspected by himself; and he knew that such a person should not be called "Jim Riley."

He never outgrew his astonishment that *he* happened to be what he was: "I'm only the reed that the whistle blows through," he said, always in surprise that he, instead of another, had been the reed selected by the cosmic musician. He felt that all human beings were both marvelous and ignominious, and he had his share of gentle pride as a marvel, but more than his share of humility as a sample of ignominy. He was utterly without egotism.

Yes, he was a great artist. The words are flaccid with overexercise; "art" and "artist" being now part of our prattling of everything under the sun; yet they must serve. We speak of "art and letters" —"art *and* letters," some artists being also men of letters, but not a great many men of letters being also artists, or comprehending artists, though it is a habit of men of letters to sit confidently in judgment upon artists. Thus a rhetorician (some-

thing which any sufficiently studious person may be) kindly reconstructed for Thackeray, not long ago, the opening sentences of *Vanity Fair*. The result was a school-book kind of thing, with vicious damage to picture and cadence, for Thackeray had been using words as a painter uses paint, and with a musician's ear as well. The man of letters was blind and deaf—even to the difference between himself and Thackeray; he did not suspect that Thackeray knew the "proper" rhetorical order (had known it, naturally, since his school days) and had discarded it for the very reason that it brought about that chaste result triumphantly presented by the professor.

An artist is a person who reveals bits of creation by re-creating semblances of them in symbols. Men of letters are students of the symbols which artists of a certain kind—dead literary artists—were wont to use. Mr. Riley, born an artist, became a man of letters, though he did not insist that the artists whom he studied must be dead. There is almost always this difference between a man of letters and an artist who has become also a man of letters. The man purely of letters will have his artists dead (or very foreign) before he so honors them as to chop them up into little laws for the living. But the artist-man-of-letters cares only for the art and for the life it expresses; and he is able to recognize it instantly, even when it is the product of a "new man." Men who have done great work greet and hail the good work of others, but upon the bad work

of others they usually are silent, except in extreme privacy. It was thus with Mr. Riley, for he was a poet, and not a mosquito. Neither was he of that ingrowing sort of half-artists who cry out passionately that they "exist to give expression to themselves." His purpose was to express life other than his own; and even then he was "only the reed that the whistle blew through."

He could be hurt—hurt badly—but he had no rancor and repaid no injury. With all the affection and applause that answered him from both people and press, there were certain mosquito-minded critics, a few editorial writers and some reviewers (particularly of his early work) who were often vicious and sometimes actually personal;—God in His heaven couldn't tell why! This is one of the most curious and ignominious things in human nature, but every man whose head seems lifted over the heads of his fellows knows that his elevation has made certain men and women, strangers to himself, into enemies. They hate him and pursue him slyly and malignantly, perhaps for years. Mr. Riley had his inevitable allotment of these inexplicable creatures, and they were successful in making him pace the floor now and then. Yes, even he had to do his sentry-go, walking off the indignation of the man who may safely be insulted since he can not retaliate or even answer.

Then there was an odd folly, prevalent for a long time among the more provincial kind of people in his own State. These hotly alleged that Mr. Riley's

dialect poems were injuring Indiana's reputation for culture. It seems incredible, but there did exist considerable numbers of such people, and they made themselves heard. Few of them were true Hoosiers of pioneer stock; most of them belonged to feather-head breeds from elsewhere, and they were worried lest some New York hotel clerk, seeing them write the name of an Indiana town upon his register, should appraise them as farmers. Edward Eggleston had made the East think Indiana unfashionable enough, the sufferers alleged bitterly (the East consisting principally of some herd-bound Philadelphians encountered at a sea-beach), and just as the State was emerging from the *Hoosier Schoolmaster* disaster, Mr. Riley's poems began the ruinous work all over again, and every Hoosier's life would be one long shame if Mr. Riley were encouraged to go on writing them.

Strange that such buzzing could make a great man wince! Yet even in his later years the mosquitoes dug in and drew blood sometimes. Once when he was ill, and his middle-aged boy friend sat by his bedside, the poet drowsed a while, then tossed suddenly, flung out an arm, and opened his eyes wide, seeing nothing material. He spoke loudly, in a sonorous voice of a strange quality unknown to the visitor, uttering the word "renown" three mournful times. "Renown! Renown! Renown!" he said. "The higher you lift your head the more can see to strike it!"

He could turn at will, however, to some powerful

consolations. He said, one day: "So long as a fellow knows that Howells and Mark Twain think well of him, I guess he can stand a good deal from other people! It would be pretty bad if *they* didn't like him, but, as long as they do, he must be pretty nearly all right."

He knew, too, that the every-day people of the country were grateful to him and grateful for him; they felt that he was a gift to them. And in his "platform career," during those years when he went about the country reading his poems, he saw with his eyes and heard with his ears what people thought of him. Never any other man stood night after night on stage or platform to receive such solid roars of applause for the "reading" of poems —and for himself. He did not "read" his poems; he did not "recite" them, either; he took his whole body into his hands, as it were, and by his wizard mastery of suggestion left no James Whitcomb Riley at all upon the stage; instead, the audience saw and heard whatever the incomparable comedian wished them to see and hear. He held a literally unmatched power over them for riotous laughter or for actual copious tears; and no one who ever saw an exhibition of that power will forget it—or forget him. There he stood, alone upon the stage, a blond, shortish, whimsical man in evening clothes —a figure with "a whole lot of style," and a whole lot of its own style too! He offered a deferential prefatory sentence or so; then suddenly face and figure altered, seemed to merge completely into

those of a person altogether different from the poet, and not Mr. Riley, but a Hoosier farm hand, perhaps, or a thin little girl stood before you, "done to the life." Then the voice came, "done to the life," too—done to the last half-audible breath at the end of husky chuckle or wistful sigh. There was no visible effort on the part of the magician; the audience did not strain or worry for him as audiences so often do for those who "entertain" them, because his craft lay not in contortion but in a glamouring suggestion that held spectators rapt and magnetized. Mr. Nat Goodwin's opinions upon the production of realistic pathos in comedy may be accepted as academic. Mr. Goodwin said: "*I* used to recite 'Good-by, Jim'—until I heard Riley do it. Then I asked the Lord to forgive me, and never tried it again!"

Even as the poet sat and talked quietly with a friend these extraordinary impersonations came playing upon the surface of his face and voice; his talk was like quicksilver. He had his melancholies and apprehensions, but he chuckled over them mournfully, himself, and there never was another chuckle so unctuous as his—never! He was the only front-rank poet in whom humor was predominant.

. . . That jaunty figure has been missing from the shady sidewalks of Indianapolis a long time—six years. Spick and span, it was, tail-coated always, in a "cutaway," buttoned and trim and point-device, with no bagginess to his knees, either; for he was

a short-haired poet, yet no tea-and-candles poet. How often and often we Hoosiers of the capital would smile and hasten our steps to get a lucky word with him when we saw him blithely sauntering under the maple shade trees, homeward—toward Lockerbie Street—that figure best known and loved in all the State!

His head, never stooping, was tilted ever so little to one side; and there was always something about the poise of his shoulders and in his buoyant step that suggested a boy jubilating along with a minstrel band—as if he listened in his mind, as he walked, to such tunes as minstrel bands play. In fact, I think he did, for if you walked behind him, and he was unaware, you could nearly always hear him half whistling, half breathing an old tune of that sort.

But six years ago the jaunty walk stopped suddenly; he walked no more. After a time we Hoosiers saw him again: a serene face at the window of a limousine that was always out so many hours a day in the wintry streets and wintry open country; and there was the old twinkling response if he saw us, and a wave of his hand—his left hand. Or we went again to sit by his fireside, and found him crippled, but "all there," his body serving him only a little; still we found him jaunty Mr. Riley as of yore. He was Doctor Riley now, as well as Mister and Master; he had university degrees and heavy medals of gold —portrait by Sargent some time before his illness; many other portraits, some as near him as the

Sargent—and he was able to go to great banquets that notables gave for him on his birthdays. He went South for the winter, and in one city ten thousand school children marched through the rain to greet him.

But now, since the other night, we Hoosiers shall not see that face again, not in the daylight, not even passing us quickly in the car that we got to know so well. It was a face like no other; beneath it lay the modeling of the face of Keats, as Severn sketched the dying Englishman in Rome; but the outward of it was all comedian; solemn in repose, like a comedian's, but leaping and sparkling to a greeting. No one saw it and forgot it. Nor shall we ever forget it; and though we can not see it in the daylight again, there will be moonshiny nights when we shall see in the distance, under our maple trees, a figure walking lightly to the music of an unseen minstrel band—the dear and jaunty figure of our poet.

But he is not Indiana's poet. Up and down the land the school children keep his birthday, and fretful scribblers who worried (while yet he lay in state in the Hoosier Capitol) lest he were no "true poet" may happily cease their fidgeting: the laurel is bestowed by the people. Not even the king can make a laureate; the laurel is always bestowed by the people. Afterward the universities hear of what has happened and protect the wreath.

James Whitcomb Riley is the American people's poet. Mr. Howells called him the National Poet, and

when Mr. Howells and the nation agree upon a question of literature the rest of us may as well consider that question officially settled. Mr. Riley is sure of his statue.

America has produced poets who could have been English poets, or, translated, French poets, or German; but Mr. Riley was never anything except American: translation into other tongues leaves him still purely American. Translation could not make one of his patriotic poems into a tribute to an emperor or a king. For what he loved above all else, throughout his life, was the American people; and he saw the great common soul of that people in the symbol of the Republic—"Old Glory"!

Booth Tarkington.

THE NAME OF OLD GLORY

THE NAME OF OLD GLORY

1898

I

OLD Glory! say, who,
by the ships and the crew,
And the long, blended ranks of the gray and the
blue,—
Who gave you, Old Glory, the name that you bear
With such pride everywhere
As you cast yourself free to the rapturous air
And leap out full-length, as we're wanting you
to?—
Who gave you that name, with the ring of the same,
And the honor and fame so becoming to you?—
Your stripes stroked in ripples of white and of red,
With your stars at their glittering best overhead—
By day or by night
Their delightfulest light
Laughing down from their little square heaven of
blue!—
Who gave you the name of Old Glory?—say, who—
Who gave you the name of Old Glory?

The old banner lifted, and faltering then
In vague lisps and whispers fell silent again.

II

Old Glory,—speak out!—we are asking about
How you happened to "favor" a name, so to say,
That sounds so familiar and careless and gay
As we cheer it and shout in our wild breezy way—
We—the *crowd,* every man of us, calling you that—
We—Tom, Dick, and Harry—each swinging his hat
And hurrahing "Old Glory!" like you were our kin,
When—*Lord!*—we all know we're as common as
sin!
And yet it just seems like you *humor* us all
And waft us your thanks, as we hail you and fall
Into line, with you over us, waving us on
Where our glorified, sanctified betters have gone.—
And this is the reason we're wanting to know—
(And we're wanting it *so!*—
Where our own fathers went we are willing to
go.)—
Who gave you the name of Old Glory—Oho!—
Who gave you the name of Old Glory?

The old flag unfurled with a billowy thrill
For an instant, then wistfully sighed and was still.

III

Old Glory: the story we're wanting to hear
Is what the plain facts of your christening were,—

For your name—just to hear it,
Repeat it, and cheer it, 's a tang to the spirit
As salt as a tear;—
And seeing you fly, and the boys marching by,
There's a shout in the throat and a blur in the eye
And an aching to live for you always—or die,
If, dying, we still keep you waving on high.
And so, by our love
For you, floating above,
And the scars of all wars and the sorrows thereof,
Who gave you the name of Old Glory, and why
Are we thrilled at the name of Old Glory?

Then the old banner leaped, like a sail in the blast,
And fluttered an audible answer at last.—

IV

And it spake, with a shake of the voice, and it said:—
By the driven snow-white and the living blood-red
Of my bars, and their heaven of stars overhead—
By the symbol conjoined of them all, skyward cast,
As I float from the steeple, or flap at the mast,
Or droop o'er the sod where the long grasses nod,—
My name is as old as the glory of God.
. . . So I came by the name of Old Glory.

AMERICA

BUFFALO, NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 14, 1901

O Thou, America—Messiah of Nations!

I

IN the need that bows us thus,
America!
Shape a mighty song for us—
America!
Song to whelm a hundred years'
Roar of wars and rain of tears
'Neath a world's triumphant cheers:
America! America!

II

Lift the trumpet to thy mouth,
America!
East and West and North and South—
America!
Call us round the dazzling shrine
Of the starry old ensign—
New baptized in blood of thine,
America! America!

III

Dying eyes through pitying mists,
America!
See the Assassin's shackled wrists,
America!
Patient eyes that turn their sight
From all blackening crime and blight
Still toward Heaven's holy light—
America! America!

IV

High o'erlooking sea and land,
America!
Trustfully with outheld hand,
America!
Thou dost welcome all in quest
Of thy freedom, peace and rest—
Every exile is thy guest,
America! America!

V

Thine a universal love,
America!
Thine the cross and crown thereof,
America!

Aid us, then, to sing thy worth:
God hath builded, from thy birth,
The first nation of the earth—
America! America!

A MONUMENT FOR THE SOLDIERS

A MONUMENT for the Soldiers!
And what will ye build it of?
Can ye build it of marble, or brass, or bronze,
Outlasting the Soldier's love?
Can ye glorify it with legends
As grand as their blood hath writ
From the inmost shrine of this land of thine
To the outermost verge of it?

And the answer came: We would build it
Out of our hopes made sure,
And out of our purest prayers and tears,
And out of our faith secure:
We would build it out of the great white truths
Their death hath sanctified,
And the sculptured forms of the men in arms,
And their faces ere they died.

And what heroic figures
Can the sculptor carve in stone?
Can the marble breast be made to bleed,
And the marble lips to moan?
Can the marble brow be fevered?
And the marble eyes be graved
To look their last, as the flag floats past,
On the country they have saved?

And the answer came: The figures
  Shall all be fair and brave,
And, as befitting, as pure and white
  As stars above their grave!
The marble lips, and breast and brow
  Whereon the laurel lies,
Bequeath us right to guard the flight
  Of the old flag in the skies!

A monument for the Soldiers!
  Built of a people's love,
And blazoned and decked and panoplied
  With the hearts ye build it of!
And see that ye build it stately,
  In pillar and niche and gate,
And high in pose as the souls of those
  It would commemorate!

THE HOME-VOYAGE

GENERAL HENRY W. LAWTON—FELL AT SAN MATEO, DECEMBER 19, 1899. IN STATE, INDIANAPOLIS, FEBRUARY 6, 1900

BEAR with us, O Great Captain, if our pride
Show equal measure with our grief's excess
In greeting you in this your helplessness
To countermand our vanity or hide
Your stern displeasure that we thus had tried
To praise you, knowing praise was your distress:
But this home-coming swells our hearts no less—
Because for love of home you proudly died.
Lo! then, the cable, fathoms 'neath the keel
That shapes your course, is eloquent of you;
The old flag, too, at half-mast overhead—
We doubt not that its gale-kissed ripples feel
A prouder sense of red and white and blue,—
The stars—Ah, God, were *they* interpreted!

In strange lands were your latest honors won—
In strange wilds, with strange dangers all beset;
With rain, like tears, the face of day was wet,
As rang the ambushed foeman's fateful gun:
And as you felt your final duty done,

We feel *that* glory thrills your spirit yet,—
When at the front, in swiftest death, you met
The patriot's doom and best reward in one.
And so the tumult of that island war,
At last, for you, is stilled forevermore—
Its scenes of blood blend white as ocean foam
On your rapt vision as you sight afar
The sails of peace, and from that alien shore
The proud ship bears you on your voyage
home.

Or rough or smooth the wave, or lowering day
Or starlit sky—you hold, by native right,
Your high tranquillity—the silent might
Of the true hero—so you led the way
To victory through stormiest battle-fray,
Because your followers, high above the fight,
Heard your soul's lightest whisper bid them smite
For God and man and space to kneel and pray.
And thus you cross the seas unto your own
Beloved land, convoyed with honors meet,
Saluted as your home's first heritage—
Nor salutation from your State alone,
But *all* the States, gathered in mighty fleet,
Dip colors as you move to anchorage.

AMERICA'S THANKSGIVING

1900

FATHER all bountiful, in mercy bear
With this our universal voice of prayer—
The voice that needs must be
Upraised in thanks to Thee,
O Father, from Thy children everywhere.

A multitudinous voice, wherein we fain
Wouldst have Thee hear no lightest sob of pain—
No murmur of distress,
Nor moan of loneliness,
Nor drip of tears, though soft as summer rain.

And, Father, give us first to comprehend,
No ill can come from Thee; lean Thou and lend
Us clearer sight to see
Our boundless debt to Thee,
Since all Thy deeds are blessings, in the end.

And let us feel and know that, being Thine,
We are inheritors of hearts divine,
And hands endowed with skill,
And strength to work Thy will,
And fashion to fulfilment Thy design.

So, let us thank Thee, with all self aside,
Nor any lingering taint of mortal pride;
As here to Thee we dare
Uplift our faltering prayer,
Lend it some fervor of the glorified.

We thank Thee that our land is loved of Thee
The blessed home of thrift and industry,
With ever-open door
Of welcome to the poor—
Thy shielding hand o'er all abidingly.

E'en thus we thank Thee for the wrong that grew
Into a right that heroes battled to,
With brothers long estranged,
Once more as brothers ranged
Beneath the red and white and starry blue.

Ay, thanks—though tremulous the thanks
expressed—
Thanks for the battle at its worst, and best—
For all the clanging fray
Whose discord dies away
Into a pastoral-song of peace and rest.

SOLDIERS HERE TO-DAY

1

SOLDIERS and saviors of the homes we love;
Heroes and patriots who marched away,
And who marched back, and who marched on above—
All—all are here to-day!

By the dear cause you fought for—you are here;
At summons of bugle, and the drum
Whose palpitating syllables were ne'er
More musical, you come!

Here—by the stars that bloom in the fields of blue,
And by the bird above with shielding wings;
And by the flag that floats out over you,
With silken beckonings—

Ay, here beneath its folds are gathered all
Who warred unscathed for blessings that it gave—
Still blessed its champion, though it but fall
A shadow on his grave!

II

We greet you, Victors, as in vast array
You gather from the scenes of strife and death—
From spectral fortress-walls where curls away
The cannon's latest breath.

We greet you—from the crumbling battlements
Where once again the old flag feels the breeze
Stroke out its tattered stripes and smooth its rents
With rippling ecstasies.

From living tombs where every hope seemed lost—
With famine quarantined by bristling guns—
The prison-pens—the guards—the "dead-line" crossed
By—riddled skeletons!

From furrowed plains, sown thick with bursting shells—
From mountain gorge, and toppling crags o'erhead—
From wards of pestilential hospitals,
And trenches of the dead.

III

In fancy all are here. The night is o'er,
And through dissolving mists the morning gleams;
And clustered round their hearths we see once more
The heroes of our dreams.

Strong, tawny faces, some, and some are fair,
And some are marked with age's latest prime,
And, seer-like, browed and aureoled with hair
As hoar as winter-time.

The faces of fond lovers, glorified—
The faces of the husband and the wife—
The babe's face nestled at the mother's side,
And smiling back at life;

A bloom of happiness in every cheek—
A thrill of tingling joy in every vein—
In every soul a rapture they will seek
In Heaven, and find again!

IV

'Tis not a vision only—we who pay
But the poor tribute of our praises here
Are equal sharers in the guerdon they
Purchased at price so dear.

The angel, Peace, o'er all uplifts her hand,
  Waving the olive, and with heavenly eyes
Shedding a light of love o'er sea and land
    As sunshine from the skies.

Her figure pedestaled on Freedom's soil—
  Her sandals kissed with seas of golden grain—
Queen of a realm of joy-requited toil
    That glories in her reign.

O blessed land of labor and reward!
  O gracious Ruler, let Thy reign endure;
In pruning-hook and plough-share beat the sword,
    And reap the harvest sure!

THE SILENT VICTORS

May 30, 1878

I

DEEP, tender, firm and true, the Nation's heart
Throbs for her gallant heroes passed away,
Who in grim Battle's drama played their part,
And slumber here to-day.—

Warm hearts that beat their lives out at the shrine
Of Freedom, while our country held its breath
As brave battalions wheeled themselves in line
And marched upon their death:

When Freedom's Flag, its natal wounds scarce healed,
Was torn from peaceful winds and flung again
To shudder in the storm of battle-field—
The elements of men,—

When every star that glittered was a mark
For Treason's ball, and every rippling bar
Of red and white was sullied with the dark
And purple stain of war:

When angry guns, like famished beasts of prey,
  Were howling o'er their gory feast of lives,
And sending dismal echoes far away
  To mothers, maids, and wives:—

The mother, kneeling in the empty night,
  With pleading hands uplifted for the son
Who, even as she prayed, had fought the fight—
  The victory had won:

The wife, with trembling hand that wrote to say
  The babe was waiting for the sire's caress—
The letter meeting that upon the way,—
  The babe was fatherless:

The maiden, with her lips, in fancy, pressed
  Against the brow once dewy with her breath,
Now, lying numb, unknown, and uncaressed
  Save by the dews of death.

II

What meed of tribute can the poet pay
  The Soldier, but to trail the ivy-vine
Of idle rhyme above his grave to-day
  In epitaph design?—

Or wreathe with laurel-words the icy brows
  That ache no longer with a dream of fame,
But, pillowed lowly in the narrow house,
  Renowned beyond the name.

The dewy tear-drops of the night may fall,
And tender morning with her shining hand
May brush them from the grasses green and tall
That undulate the land.—

Yet song of Peace nor din of toil and thrift,
Nor chanted honors, with the flowers we heap,
Can yield us hope the Hero's head to lift
Out of its dreamless sleep:

The dear old Flag, whose faintest flutter flies
A stirring echo through each patriot breast,
Can never coax to life the folded eyes
That saw its wrongs redressed—

That watched it waver when the fight was hot,
And blazed with newer courage to its aid,
Regardless of the shower of shell and shot
Through which the charge was made;—

And when, at last, they saw it plume its wings,
Like some proud bird in stormy element,
And soar untrammeled on its wanderings,
They closed in death, content.

III

O Mother, you who miss the smiling face
Of that dear boy who vanished from your sight,
And left you weeping o'er the vacant place
He used to fill at night,—

Who left you dazed, bewildered, on a day
  That echoed wild huzzas, and roar of guns
That drowned the farewell words you tried to say
  To incoherent ones;—

Be glad and proud you had the life to give—
  Be comforted through all the years to come,—
Your country has a longer life to live,
  Your son a better home.

O Widow, weeping o'er the orphaned child,
  Who only lifts his questioning eyes to send
A keener pang to grief unreconciled,—
  Teach him to comprehend

He had a father brave enough to stand
  Before the fire of Treason's blazing gun,
That, dying, he might will the rich old land
  Of Freedom to his son.

And, Maiden, living on through lonely years
  In fealty to love's enduring ties,—
With strong faith gleaming through the tender
      tears
  That gather in your eyes,

Look up! and own, in gratefulness of prayer,
  Submission to the will of Heaven's High Host:—
I see your Angel-soldier pacing there,
  Expectant at his post.—

I see the rank and file of armies vast,
That muster under one supreme control;
I hear the trumpet sound the signal-blast—
The calling of the roll—

The grand divisions falling into line
And forming, under voice of One alone
Who gives command, and joins with tongue divine
The hymn that shakes the Throne.

IV

And thus, in tribute to the forms that rest
In their last camping-ground, we strew the bloom
And fragrance of the flowers they loved the best,
In silence o'er the tomb.

With reverent hands we twine the Hero's wreath
And clasp it tenderly on stake or stone
That stands the sentinel for each beneath
Whose glory is our own.

While in the violet that greets the sun,
We see the azure eye of some lost boy;
And in the rose the ruddy cheek of one
We kissed in childish joy,—

Recalling, haply, when he marched away,
He laughed his loudest though his eyes were wet.—
The kiss he gave his mother's brow that day
Is there and burning yet:

And through the storm of grief around her tossed,
  One ray of saddest comfort she may see,—
Four hundred thousand sons like hers were lost
  To weeping Liberty.

. . . . . .

But draw aside the drapery of gloom,
  And let the sunshine chase the clouds away
And gild with brighter glory every tomb
  We decorate to-day:

And in the holy silence reigning round,
  While prayers of perfume bless the atmosphere,
Where loyal souls of love and faith are found,
  Thank God that Peace is here!

And let each angry impulse that may start,
  Be smothered out of every loyal breast;
And, rocked within the cradle of the heart,
  Let every sorrow rest.

THE SOLDIER

THE DEDICATION OF THE SOLDIERS' AND SAILORS' MONUMENT, INDIANAPOLIS, MAY 15, 1902

THE Soldier!—meek the title, yet divine:
Therefore, with reverence as with wild acclaim,
We fain would honor in exalted line
The glorious lineage of the glorious name:
The Soldier.—Lo, he ever was and is,
Our Country's high custodian, by right
Of patriot blood that brims that heart of his
With fiercest love, yet honor infinite.

The Soldier—within whose inviolate care
The Nation takes repose,—her inmost fane
Of Freedom ever has its guardian there,
As have her forts and fleets on land and main:
The Heavenward Banner, as its ripples stream
In happy winds, or float in languid flow,
Through silken meshes ever sifts the gleam
Of sunshine on its Sentinel below.

The Soldier!—Why, the very utterance
Is music—as of rallying bugles, blent
With blur of drums and cymbals and the chants
Of battle-hymns that shake the continent!—

The thunder-chorus of a world is stirred
To awful, universal jubilee,—
Yet ever through it, pure and sweet, are heard
The prayers of Womanhood, and Infancy.

Even as a fateful tempest sudden loosed
Upon our senses, so our thoughts are blown
Back where The Soldier battled, nor refused
A grave all nameless in a clime unknown.—
The Soldier—though, perchance, worn, old and gray;
The Soldier—though, perchance, the merest lad,—
The Soldier—though he gave his life away,
Hearing the shout of "Victory," was glad;

Ay, glad and grateful, that in such a cause
His veins were drained at Freedom's holy shrine—
Rechristening the land—as first it was,—
His blood poured thus in sacramental sign
Of new baptism of the hallowed name
"My Country"—now on every lip once more
And blest of God with still enduring fame.—
This thought even then The Soldier gloried o'er.

The dying eyes upraised in rapture there,—
As, haply, he remembered how a breeze
Once swept his boyish brow and tossed his hair,
Under the fresh bloom of the orchard-trees—

When his heart hurried, in some wistful haste
  Of ecstasy, and his quick breath was wild
And balmy-sharp and chilly-sweet to taste,—
  And he towered godlike, though a trembling
    child!

Again, through luminous mists, he saw the skies'
  Far fields white-tented; and in gray and blue
And dazzling gold, he saw vast armies rise
  And fuse in fire—from which, in swiftest view,
The Old Flag soared, and friend and foe as one
  Blent in an instant's vivid mirage. . . . Then
The eyes closed smiling on the smiling sun
  That changed the seer to a child again.—

And, even so, The Soldier slept.—Our own!—
  The Soldier of our plaudits, flowers and
    tears,—
O this memorial of bronze and stone—
  His love shall outlast *this* a thousand years!
Yet, as the towering symbol bids us do,—
  With soul saluting, as salutes the hand,
We answer as The Soldier answered to
  The Captain's high command.

THE VOICE OF PEACE

INDEPENDENCE BELL: INDIANAPOLIS, NOVEMBER 17, 1904

THOUGH now forever still
  Your voice of jubilee—
We hear—we hear, and ever will,
  The Bell of Liberty!
Clear as the voice to them
  In that far night agone
Pealed from the heavens o'er Bethlehem,
  The voice of Peace peals on!

Stir all your memories up,
  O Independence Bell,
And pour from your inverted cup
  The song we love so well!
As you rang in the dawn
  Of Freedom—tolled the knell
Of Tyranny,—ring on—ring on—
  O Independence Bell!

Ring numb the wounds of wrong
  Unhealed in brain and breast;
With music like a slumber-song
  Lull tearful eyes to rest.—

Ring! Independence Bell!
  Ring on till worlds to be
Shall listen to the tale you tell
  Of Love and Liberty!

THE OLD MAN AND JIM

OLD man never had much to say—
'Ceptin' to Jim,—
And Jim was the wildest boy he had—
And the old man jes' wrapped up in him!
Never heerd him speak but once
Er twice in my life,—and first time was
When the army broke out, and Jim he went,
The old man backin' him, fer three months;
And all 'at I heerd the old man say
Was, jes' as we turned to start away,—
"Well, good-by, Jim:
Take keer of yourse'f!"

'Peared-like, he was more satisfied
Jes' *lookin'* at Jim
And likin' him all to hisse'f-like, see?—
'Cause he was jes' wrapped up in him!
And over and over I mind the day
The old man come and stood round in the way
While we was drillin', a-watchin' Jim—
And down at the deepo a-heerin' him say,
"Well, good-by, Jim:
Take keer of yourse'f!"

Never was nothin' about the *farm*
  Disting'ished Jim;
Neighbors all ust to wonder why
  The old man 'peared wrapped up in him:
But when Cap. Biggler he writ back
'At Jim was the bravest boy we had
In the whole dern rigiment, white er black,
And his fightin' good as his farmin' bad—
'At he had led, with a bullet clean
Bored through his thigh, and carried the flag
Through the bloodiest battle you ever seen,—
The old man wound up a letter to him
'At Cap. read to us, 'at said: "Tell Jim
  Good-by,
    And take keer of hisse'f!"

Jim come home jes' long enough
  To take the whim
'At he'd like to go back in the calvery—
  And the old man jes' wrapped up in him!
Jim 'lowed 'at he'd had sich luck afore,
Guessed he'd tackle her three years more.
And the old man give him a colt he'd raised,
And follered him over to Camp Ben Wade,
And laid around fer a week er so,
Watchin' Jim on dress-parade—
Tel finally he rid away,
And last he heerd was the old man say,—
  "Well, good-by, Jim:
    Take keer of yourse'f!"

Tuk the papers, the old man did,
  A-watchin' fer Jim—
Fully believin' he'd make his mark
  Some way—jes' wrapped up in him!—
And many a time the word 'u'd come
'At stirred him up like the tap of a drum—
At Petersburg, fer instunce, where
Jim rid right into their cannons there,
And *tuk* 'em, and p'inted 'em t'other way,
And socked it home to the boys in gray
As they scooted fer timber, and on and on—
Jim a lieutenant, and one arm gone,
And the old man's words in his mind all day,—
  "Well, good-by, Jim:
    Take keer of yourse'f!"

Think of a private, now, perhaps,
  We'll say like Jim,
'At's clumb clean up to the shoulder-straps—
  And the old man jes' wrapped up in him!
Think of him—with the war plum' through,
And the glorious old Red-White-and-Blue
A-laughin' the news down over Jim,
And the old man, bendin' over him—
The surgeon turnin' away with tears
'At hadn't leaked fer years and years,
As the hand of the dyin' boy clung to
His father's, the old voice in his ears,—
  "Well, good-by, Jim:
    Take keer of yourse'f!"

GRANT

AT REST—AUGUST 8, 1885

Sir Launcelot rode overthwart and endlong in a wide forest, and held no path but as wild adventure led him. . . . And he returned and came again to his horse, and took off his saddle and his bridle, and let him pasture; and unlaced his helm, and ungirdled his sword, and laid him down to sleep upon his shield before the cross.—AGE OF CHIVALRY.

WHAT shall we say of the soldier, Grant,
His sword put by and his great soul free?
How shall we cheer him now or chant
His requiem befittingly?
The fields of his conquest now are seen
Ranged no more with his armèd men—
But the rank and file of the gold and green
Of the waving grain is there again.

Though his valiant life is a nation's pride,
And his death heroic and half divine,
And our grief as great as the world is wide,
There breaks in speech but a single line:—

We loved him living, revere him dead!—
A silence then on our lips is laid:
We can say no thing that has not been said,
Nor pray one prayer that has not been
prayed.

But a spirit within us speaks: and lo,
We lean and listen to wondrous words
That have a sound as of winds that blow,
And the voice of waters and low of herds;
And we hear, as the song flows on serene,
The neigh of horses, and then the beat
Of hooves that scurry o'er pastures green,
And the patter and pad of a boy's bare feet.

A brave lad, wearing a manly brow,
Knit as with problems of grave dispute,
And a face, like the bloom of the orchard
bough,
Pink and pallid, but resolute;
And flushed it grows as the clover-bloom,
And fresh it gleams as the morning dew,
As he reins his steed where the quick quails
boom
Up from the grasses he races through.

And ho! as he rides what dreams are his?
And what have the breezes to suggest?—
Do they whisper to him of shells that whiz
O'er fields made ruddy with wrongs re-
dressed?

Does the hawk above him an Eagle float?
  Does he thrill and his boyish heart beat high,
Hearing the ribbon about his throat
  Flap as a Flag as the winds go by?

And does he dream of the Warrior's fame—
  This western boy in his rustic dress?
For, in miniature, this is the man that came
  Riding out of the Wilderness!—
The selfsame figure—the knitted brow—
  The eyes full steady—the lips full mute—
And the face, like the bloom of the orchard
      bough,
  Pink and pallid, but resolute.

Ay, this is the man, with features grim
  And stoical as the Sphinx's own,
That heard the harsh guns calling him,
  As musical as the bugle blown,
When the sweet spring heavens were clouded
      o'er
  With a tempest, glowering and wild,
And our country's flag bowed down before
  Its bursting wrath as a stricken child.

Thus, ready mounted and booted and spurred,
  He loosed his bridle and dashed away! —
Like a roll of drums were his hoof-beats heard,
  Like the shriek of the fife his charger's
      neigh!

And over his shoulder and backward blown,
We heard his voice, and we saw the sod
Reel, as our wild steeds chased his own
As though hurled on by the hand of God!

And still, in fancy, we see him ride
In the blood-red front of a hundred frays,
His face set stolid, but glorified
As a knight's of the old Arthurian days:
And victor ever as courtly, too,
Gently lifting the vanquished foe,
And staying him with a hand as true
As dealt the deadly avenging blow.

So, brighter than all of the cluster of stars
Of the flag enshrouding his form to-day,
His face shines forth from the grime of wars
With a glory that shall not pass away:
He rests at last: he has borne his part
Of salutes and salvos and cheers on cheers—
But O the sobs of his country's heart,
And the driving rain of a nation's tears!

THE QUEST OF THE FATHERS

WHAT were our Forefathers trying to find
When they weighed anchor, that desperate hour
They turned from home, and the warning wind
Sighed in the sails of the old Mayflower?
What sought they that could compensate
Their hearts for the loved ones left behind—
The household group at the glowing grate?—
What were our Forefathers trying to find?

What were they trying to find more dear
Than their native land and its annals old,—
Its throne—its church—and its worldly cheer—
Its princely state, and its hoarded gold?
What more dear than the mounds of green
There o'er the brave sires, slumbering long?
What more fair than the rural scene—
What more sweet than the throstle's song?

Faces pallid, but sternly set,
Lips locked close, as in voiceless prayer,
And eyes with never a tear-drop wet—
Even the tenderest woman's there!

But O the light from the soul within,
  As each spake each with a flashing mind—
As the lightning speaks to its kith and kin!
  What were our Forefathers trying to find?

Argonauts of a godless day—
  Seers of visions, and dreamers vain!
Their ship's foot set in a pathless way,—
  The fogs, the mists, and the blinding rain!—
When the gleam of sun, and moon and star
  Seemed lost so long they were half forgot—
When the fixed eyes found nor near nor far,
  And the night whelmed all, and the world was not.

And yet, befriended in some strange wise,
  They groped their way in the storm and stress
Through which—though their look found not the
      skies—
  The Lord's look found *them* ne'ertheless—
Found them, yea, in their piteous lot,
  As they in their faith from the first divined—
Found them, and favored them—too. But what—
  What were our Forefathers trying to find?

Numb and agasp, with the frost for breath,
  They came on a frozen shore, at last,
As bleak and drear as the coasts of death,—
  And yet their psalm o'er the wintry blast

Rang glad as though 'twere the chiming mirth
Of jubilant children landing there—
Until o'er all of the icy earth
The snows seemed warm, as they knelt in prayer.

For, lo! they were close on the trail they sought:—
In the sacred soil of the rights of men
They marked where the Master-hand had wrought;
And there they garnered and sowed again.—
Their land—then *ours,* as to-day it is,
With its flag of heaven's own light designed,
And God's vast love o'er all. . . . And *this*
Is what our Forefathers were trying to find.

LIBERTY

I

FOR a hundred years the pulse of time
Has throbbed for Liberty;
For a hundred years the grand old clime
Columbia has been free;
For a hundred years our country's love,
The Stars and Stripes, has waved above.

Away far out on the gulf of years—
Misty and faint and white
Through the fogs of wrong—a sail appears,
And the Mayflower heaves in sight,
And drifts again, with its little flock
Of a hundred souls, on Plymouth Rock.

Do you see them there—as long, long since—
Through the lens of History;
Do you see them there as their chieftain prints
In the snow his bended knee,
And lifts his voice through the wintry blast
In thanks for a peaceful home at last?

Though the skies are dark and the coast is bleak,
  And the storm is wild and fierce,
Its frozen flake on the upturned cheek
  Of the Pilgrim melts in tears,
    And the dawn that springs from the darkness
      there
    Is the morning light of an answered prayer.

The morning light of the day of Peace
  That gladdens the aching eyes,
And gives to the soul that sweet release
  That the present verifies,—
    Nor a snow so deep, nor a wind so chill
    To quench the flame of a freeman's will!

II

Days of toil when the bleeding hand
  Of the pioneer grew numb,
When the untilled tracts of the barren land
  Where the weary ones had come
    Could offer nought from a fruitful soil
    To stay the strength of the stranger's toil.

Days of pain, when the heart beat low,
  And the empty hours went by
Pitiless, with the wail of woe
  And the moan of Hunger's cry—
    When the trembling hands upraised in prayer
    Had only the strength to hold them there.

Days when the voice of hope had fled—
  Days when the eyes grown weak
Were folded to, and the tears they shed
  Were frost on a frozen cheek—
    When the storm bent down from the skies
      and gave
    A shroud of snow for the Pilgrim's grave.

Days at last when the smiling sun
  Glanced down from a summer sky,
And a music rang where the rivers run,
  And the waves went laughing by;
    And the rose peeped over the mossy bank
    While the wild deer stood in the stream and
      drank.

And the birds sang out so loud and good,
  In a symphony so clear
And pure and sweet that the woodman stood
  With his ax upraised to hear,
    And to shape the words of the tongue unknown
    Into a language all his own:—

1

Sing! every bird, to-day!
  Sing for the sky so clear,
  And the gracious breath of the atmosphere
Shall waft our cares away.

Sing! sing! for the sunshine free;
Sing through the land from sea to sea;
Lift each voice in the highest key
And sing for Liberty!

2

Sing for the arms that fling
Their fetters in the dust
And lift their hands in higher trust
Unto the one Great King;
Sing for the patriot heart and hand;
Sing for the country they have planned;
Sing that the world may understand
This is Freedom's land!

3

Sing in the tones of prayer,
Sing till the soaring soul
Shall float above the world's control
In Freedom everywhere!
Sing for the good that is to be,
Sing for the eyes that are to see
The land where man at last is free,
O sing for Liberty!

III

A holy quiet reigned, save where the hand
Of labor sent a murmur through the land,
And happy voices in a harmony
Taught every lisping breeze a melody.
A nest of cabins, where the smoke upcurled
A breathing incense to the other world.
A land of languor from the sun of noon,
That fainted slowly to the pallid moon,
Till stars, thick-scattered in the garden-land
Of Heaven by the great Jehovah's hand,
Had blossomed into light to look upon
The dusky warrior with his arrow drawn,
As skulking from the covert of the night
With serpent cunning and a fiend's delight,
With murderous spirit, and a yell of hate
The voice of Hell might tremble to translate:
When the fond mother's tender lullaby
Went quavering in shrieks all suddenly,
And baby-lips were dabbled with the stain
Of crimson at the bosom of the slain,
And peaceful homes and fortunes ruined—lost
In smoldering embers of the holocaust.
Yet on and on, through years of gloom and strife,
Our country struggled into stronger life;
Till colonies, like footprints in the sand,
Marked Freedom's pathway winding through the land—
And not the footprints to be swept away
Before the storm we hatched in Boston Bay,—

But footprints where the path of war begun
That led to Bunker Hill and Lexington,—
For he who "dared to lead where others dared
To follow" found the promise there declared
Of Liberty, in blood of Freedom's host
Baptized to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!

Oh, there were times when every patriot breast
Was riotous with sentiments expressed
In tones that swelled in volume till the sound
Of lusty war itself was well-nigh drowned.
Oh, those were times when happy eyes with tears
Brimmed o'er as all the misty doubts and fears
Were washed away, and Hope with gracious mien,
Reigned from her throne again a sovereign queen.
Until at last, upon a day like this
When flowers were blushing at the summer's kiss,
And when the sky was cloudless as the face
Of some sweet infant in its angel grace,—
There came a sound of music, thrown afloat
Upon the balmy air—a clanging note
Reiterated from the brazen throat
Of Independence Bell: A sound so sweet,
The clamoring throngs of people in the streets
Were stilled as at the solemn voice of prayer,
And heads were bowed, and lips were moving there
That made no sound—until the spell had passed,
And then, as when all sudden comes the blast
Of some tornado, came the cheer on cheer
Of every eager voice, while far and near

The echoing bells upon the atmosphere
Set glorious rumors floating, till the ear
Of every listening patriot tingled clear,
And thrilled with joy and jubilee to hear.

I

Stir all your echoes up,
O Independence Bell,
And pour from your inverted cup
The song we love so well.

Lift high your happy voice,
And swing your iron tongue
Till syllables of praise rejoice
That never yet were sung.

Ring in the gleaming dawn
Of Freedom—Toll the knell
Of Tyranny, and then ring on,
O Independence Bell.—

Ring on, and drown the moan
Above the patriot slain,
Till sorrow's voice shall catch the tone
And join the glad refrain.

Ring out the wounds of wrong
And rankle in the breast;
Your music like a slumber-song
Will lull revenge to rest.

Ring out from Occident
To Orient, and peal
From continent to continent
The mighty joy you feel.

Ring! Independence Bell!
Ring on till worlds to be
Shall listen to the tale you tell
Of love and Liberty!

IV

O Liberty—the dearest word
A bleeding country ever heard,—
We lay our hopes upon thy shrine
And offer up our lives for thine.
You gave us many happy years
Of peace and plenty ere the tears
A mourning country wept were dried
Above the graves of those who died
Upon thy threshold. And again
When newer wars were bred, and men
Went marching in the cannon's breath
And died for thee and loved the death,
While, high above them, gleaming bright,
The dear old flag remained in sight,
And lighted up their dying eyes
With smiles that brightened paradise.
O Liberty, it is thy power
To gladden us in every hour

Of gloom, and lead us by thy hand
As little children through a land
Of bud and blossom; while the days
Are filled with sunshine, and thy praise
Is warbled in the roundelays
Of joyous birds, and in the song
Of waters, murmuring along
The paths of peace, whose flowery fringe
Has roses finding deeper tinge
Of crimson, looking on themselves
Reflected—leaning from the shelves
Of cliff and crag and mossy mound
Of emerald splendor shadow-drowned.—
We hail thy presence, as you come
With bugle blast and rolling drum,
And booming guns and shouts of glee
Commingled in a symphony
That thrills the worlds that throng to see
The glory of thy pageantry.
And with thy praise, we breathe a prayer
That God who leaves you in our care
May favor us from this day on
With thy dear presence—till the dawn
Of Heaven, breaking on thy face,
Lights up thy first abiding place.

THE DRUM

O THE drum!
There is some
Intonation in thy grum
Monotony of utterance that strikes the spirit dumb,
As we hear,
Through the clear
And unclouded atmosphere,
Thy palpitating syllables roll in upon the ear!

There's a part
Of the art
Of thy music-throbbing heart
That thrills a something in us that awakens with a start,
And in rhyme
With the chime
And exactitude of time,
Goes marching on to glory to thy melody sublime.

And the guest
Of the breast
That thy rolling robs of rest
Is a patriotic spirit as a Continental dressed;

And he looms
From the glooms
Of a century of tombs,
And the blood he spilled at Lexington in living beauty blooms.

And his eyes
Wear the guise
Of a purpose pure and wise,
As the love of them is lifted to a something in the skies
That is bright
Red and white,
With a blur of starry light,
As it laughs in silken ripples to the breezes day and night.

There are deep
Hushes creep
O'er the pulses as they leap,
As thy tumult, fainter growing, on the silence falls asleep,
While the prayer
Rising there
Wills the sea and earth and air
As a heritage to Freedom's sons and daughters everywhere.

Then, with sound
As profound
As the thunderings resound,
Come thy wild reverberations in a throe that shakes
the ground,
And a cry
Flung on high,
Like the flag it flutters by,
Wings rapturously upward till it nestles in the sky.

O the drum!
There is some
Intonation in thy grum
Monotony of utterance that strikes the spirit dumb,
As we hear,
Through the clear
And unclouded atmosphere,
Thy palpitating syllables roll in upon the ear!

McFEETERS' FOURTH

IT was needless to say 'twas a glorious day,
And to boast of it all in that spread-eagle way
That our Forefathers had since the hour of the birth
Of this most patriotic republic on earth!
But 'twas justice, of course, to admit that the sight
Of the old Stars-and-Stripes was a thing of delight
In the eyes of a fellow, however he tried
To look on the day with a dignified pride
That meant not to brook any turbulent glee
Or riotous flourish of loud jubilee!

So argued McFeeters, all grim and severe,
Who the long night before, with a feeling of fear,
Had slumbered but fitfully, hearing the swish
Of the sky-rocket over his roof, with the wish
That the boy-fiend who fired it were fast to the end
Of the stick to forever and ever ascend!
Or to hopelessly ask why the boy with the horn
And its horrible havoc had ever been born!
Or to wish, in his wakefulness, staring aghast,
That this Fourth of July were as dead as the last!

So, yesterday morning, McFeeters arose,
With a fire in his eyes, and a cold in his nose,
And a guttural voice in appropriate key
With a temper as gruff as a temper could be.
He growled at the servant he met on the stair,
Because he was whistling a national air,
And he growled at the maid on the balcony, who
Stood enrapt with the tune of "The Red-White-and-
Blue"
That a band was discoursing like mad in the street,
With drumsticks that banged, and with cymbals that
beat.

And he growled at his wife, as she buttoned his vest,
And applausively pinned a rosette on his breast
Of the national colors, and lured from his purse
Some change for the boys—for fire-crackers—or
worse;
And she pointed with pride to a soldier in blue
In a frame on the wall, and the colors there, too;
And he felt, as he looked on the features, the glow
The painter found there twenty long years ago,
And a passionate thrill in his breast, as he felt
Instinctively round for the sword in his belt.

What was it that hung like a mist o'er the room?—
The tumult without—and the music—the boom
Of the cannon—the blare of the bugle and fife?—
No matter!—McFeeters was kissing his wife,

And laughing and crying and waving his hat
Like a genuine soldier, and crazy, at that!
—*Was* it needless to say 'twas a glorious day
And to boast of it all in that spread-eagle way
That our Forefathers had since the hour of the birth
Of this most patriotic republic on earth?

THOUGHTS ON THE LATE WAR

I WAS for Union—you, ag'in' it.
'Pears like, to me, each side was winner,
Lookin' at now and all 'at's in it.
Le' 's go to dinner.

Le' 's kind o' jes' set down together
And do some pardnership forgittin'—
Talk, say, for instunce, 'bout the weather,
Or somepin' fittin'.

The war, you know, 's all done and ended,
And ain't changed no p'ints o' the compass;
Both North and South the health's jes' splendid
As 'fore the rumpus.

The old farms and the old plantations
Still ockipies the'r old positions.
Le' 's git back to old situations
And old ambitions.

Le' 's let up on this blame', infernal
Tongue-lashin' and lap-jacket vauntin',
And git back home to the eternal
Ca'm we're a-wantin',

Peace kind o' sort o' suits my diet—
When women does my cookin' for me;
Ther' wasn't overly much pie et
Durin' the army.

DECORATION DAY ON THE PLACE

IT'S lonesome—sorto' lonesome,—it's a *Sund'y-day*, to me,
It 'pears-like—more'n any day I nearly ever see!—
Yit, with the Stars and Stripes above, a-flutterin' in the air,
On ev'ry Soldier's grave I'd love to lay a lily thare.

They say, though, Decoration Day is giner'ly observed
'Most *ev'rywheres*—espeshally by soldier-boys that's served.—
But me and Mother's never went—we seldom git away,—
In p'int o' fact, we're *allus* home on *Decoration Day*.

They say the old boys marches through the streets in colum's grand,
A-follerin' the old war-tunes they're playin' on the band—
And citizuns all jinin' in—and little childern, too—
All marchin', under shelter of the old Red White and Blue.—

With roses! roses! roses!—ev'rybody in the
town!—
And crowds o' little girls in white, jest fairly loaded
down!—
Oh! don't The Boys know it, from theyr camp
acrost the hill?—
Don't they see theyr com'rads comin' and the old
flag wavin' still?

Oh! can't they hear the bugul and the rattle of the
drum?—
Ain't they no way under heavens they can rickollect
us some?
Ain't they no way we can coax 'em, through the
roses, jest to say
They know that ev'ry day on earth's theyr Decora-
tion Day?

We've tried that—me and Mother,—whare Elias
takes his rest,
In the orchurd—in his uniform, and hands acrost
his brest,
And the flag he died fer, smilin' and a-ripplin' in the
breeze
Above his grave—and over that,—*the robin in the
trees!*

And *yit* it's lonesome—lonesome!—It's a *Sund'y-day,* to *me,*
It 'pears-like—more'n any day I nearly ever see!—
Still, with the Stars and Stripes above, a-flutterin' in the air,
On ev'ry soldier's grave I'd love to lay a lily thare.

A PEACE-HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC

THERE'S a Voice across the Nation like a
mighty ocean-hail,
Borne up from out the Southward as the seas before
the gale;
Its breath is in the streaming Flag and in the flying
sail—
As we go sailing on.

'Tis a Voice that we remember—ere its summons
soothed as now—
When it rang in battle-challenge, and we answered
vow with vow,—
With roar of gun and hiss of sword and crash of
prow and prow,
As we went sailing on.

Our hope sank, even as we saw the sun sink faint
and far,—
The Ship of State went groping through the blind-
ing smoke of War—
Through blackest midnight lurching, all uncheered
of moon or star,
Yet sailing—sailing on,

As One who spake the dead awake, with life-blood leaping warm—
Who walked the troubled waters, all unscathed, in mortal form,—
We felt our Pilot's presence with His hand upon the storm,
As we went sailing on.

O Voice of passion lulled to peace, this dawning of To-day—
O Voices twain now blent as one, ye sing all fears away,
Since foe and foe are friends, and lo! the Lord, as glad as they.—
He sends us sailing on.

THE BOY PATRIOT

I WANT to be a Soldier!—
A Soldier!—
A Soldier!—
I want to be a Soldier, with a saber in my hand
Or a little carbine rifle, or a musket on my shoulder,
Or just a snare-drum, snarling in the middle of the band;
I want to hear, high overhead, The Old Flag flap her wings
While all the Army, following, in chorus cheers and sings;
I want to hear the tramp and jar
Of patriots a million,
As gaily dancing off to war
As dancing a cotillion.

I want to be a Soldier!—
A Soldier!—
A Soldier!—
I want to be a Soldier, with a saber in my hand
Or a little carbine rifle, or a musket on my shoulder,
Or just a snare-drum, snarling in the middle of the band,

I want to see the battle!—
The battle!—
The battle!—
I want to see the battle, and be in it to the end;—
I want to hear the cannon clear their throats and
catch the prattle
Of all the pretty compliments the enemy can send!—
And then I know my wits will go,—and where I
shouldn't be—
Well, there's the spot, in any fight, that you may
search for me.
So, when our foes have had their fill,
Though I'm among the dying,
To see The Old Flag flying still,
I'll laugh to leave her flying!

I want to be a Soldier!—
A Soldier!—
A Soldier!—
I want to be a Soldier, with a saber in my hand
Or a little carbine rifle, or a musket on my shoulder,
Or just a snare-drum, snarling in the middle of
the band.

A CHILD'S HOME—LONG AGO

THE terse old maxim of the poet's pen,
"What constitutes a state? High-minded men,"
Holds such a wealth of truth, when one reflects,
It seems more like a sermon than a text.
Yet looking dimly backward o'er the years
Where first the face of progress, through our tears,
Smiles on us, where within the forest gloom
The bud of Indiana bursts in bloom;
We can but see, from Lake of Michigan,
To where Ohio rolls, the work of man—
From where our eastern boundary-line is pressed,
To where the Wabash revels on the west;
A broad expanse of fair and fertile land,
Like some rich landscape, from a master's hand,
That in its rustic frame, we well might call
The fairest picture on Columbia's wall—
A picture now—a masterpiece divine,
That, ere the artist's hand in its design
Had traced this loveliness, was but a blot
Of ugly pigment on a barren spot—
A blur of color on a hueless ground
Where scarce a hint of beauty could be found.
But patiently the hand of labor wrought,
And from each touch new inspiration caught;
Toiled on through disadvantages untold,
And at each onward step found firmer hold,

And obstacles that threatened long delay
He climbed above and went upon his way,
Until at last, exulting, he could see
The sweet reward of patient industry;
And beauties he had hardly dared to dream,
In hill and vale, and cliff and winding stream,
Spread out before his vision, till the soul
Within him seemed to leap beyond control,
And hover over lands the genii made
Of sifted sunshine and of dew-washed shade.

And who, indeed, that loves his native state,
Has not a heart to throb and palpitate
With ecstasy, as o'er her wintry past,
He sees the sun of summer dawn at last,
And catches, through the misty shower of light,
Dim glimpses of the orchard's bloom of white,
And fields beyond where, waving empty sleeves,
The "scarecrow" beckons to the feathered thieves
That perch, and perk their nimble heads away,
And flit away with harsh, discordant cry,
Or shading with his hand, his dazzled eyes,
Looks out across the deadened paradise,
Where wild flowers blossom, and the ivy clings,
And from the ruined oak the grapevine swings,
While high above upon the leafless tree
The red-head drummer beats his reveille,
And, like an army thronging at the sound,
The soldier corn-stalks on their battle-ground
March on to harvest victories, and flaunt
Their banners o'er the battlements of want!

And musing thus to-day, the pioneer
Whose brawny arm has grubbed a pathway here,
Stands, haply, with his vision backward turned
To where the log-heap of the past was burned,
And sees again, as in some shadowy dream,
The wild deer bending o'er the hidden stream,
Or sniffing, with his antlers lifted high,
The gawky crane, as he comes trailing by,
And drops in shallow tides below to wade
On tilting legs through dusky depths of shade,
While just across the glossy otter slips
Like some wet shadow 'neath the ripple's lips
As, drifting from the thicket-hid bayou,
The wild duck paddles past his rendezvous,
And overhead the beech and sycamore,
That lean their giant forms from either shore,
Clasp hands and bow their heads, as though to bless
In whispered prayer the sleeping wilderness.
A scene of such magnificent expanse
Of nameless grandeur that the utterance
Of even feathered orators is faint.
For here the dove's most melancholy plaint
Invokes no echo, and the killdeer's call
Swoons in the murmur of the waterfall
That, faint and far away and undefined,
Falls like a ghost of sound upon the mind.
The voice of nature's very self drops low,
As though she whispered of the long ago,
When down the wandering stream the rude canoe
Of some lone trapper glided into view,

And loitered down the watery path that led
Through forest depths that only knew the tread
Of savage beasts; and wild barbarians
That skulked about with blood upon their hands
And murder in their hearts. The light of day
Might barely pierce the gloominess that lay
Like some dark pall across the water's face,
And folded all the land in its embrace;
The panther's whimper, and the bear's low growl—
The snake's sharp rattle, and the wolf's wild howl:
The owl's grim chuckle, as it rose and fell
In alternation with the Indian's yell,
Made fitting prelude for the gory plays
That were enacted in the early days.

But fancy, soaring o'er the storm of grief
Like that lone bird that brought the olive leaf,
Brings only peace—an amulet whose spell
Works stranger marvels than the tongue can tell—
For o'er the vision, like a mirage, falls
The old log cabin with its dingy walls,
And crippled chimney with its crutch-like prop
Beneath a sagging shoulder at the top:
The coonskin battened fast on either side—
The wisps of leaf-tobacco—"cut-and-dried";
The yellow strands of quartered apples, hung
In rich festoons that tangle in among
The morning-glory vines that clamber o'er
The little clapboard roof above the door:
The old well-sweep that drops a courtesy
To every thirsting soul so graciously,

The stranger, as he drains the dripping gourd,
Intuitively murmurs, "Thank the Lord!"
Again through mists of memory arise
The simple scenes of home before the eyes:—
The happy mother, humming, with her wheel,
The dear old melodies that used to steal
So drowsily upon the summer air,
The house-dog hid his bone, forgot his care,
And nestled at her feet, to dream, perchance,
Some cooling dream of winter-time romance:
The square of sunshine through the open door
That notched its edge across the puncheon floor,
And made a golden coverlet whereon
The god of slumber had a picture drawn
Of Babyhood, in all the loveliness
Of dimpled cheek and limb and linsey dress:
The bough-filled fire-place, and the mantel wide,
Its fire-scorched ankles stretched on either side,
Where, perched upon its shoulders 'neath the joist,
The old clock hiccoughed, harsh and husky-voiced,
And snarled the premonition, dire and dread,
When it should hammer Time upon the head:
Tomatoes, red and yellow, in a row,
Preserved not then for diet, but for show,—
Like rare and precious jewels in the rough
Whose worth was not appraised at half enough:
The jars of jelly, with their dusty tops;
The bunch of pennyroyal; the cordial drops;
The flask of camphor, and the vial of squills,
The box of buttons, garden-seeds, and pills;

And, ending all the mantel's bric-à-brac,
The old, time-honored "Family Almanack."
And Memory, with a mother's touch of love,
Climbs with us to the dusky loft above,
Where drowsily we trail our fingers in
The mealy treasures of the harvest bin;
And, feeling with our hands the open track,
We pat the bag of barley on the back;
And, groping onward through the mellow gloom,
We catch the hidden apple's faint perfume,
And, mingling with it, fragrant hints of pear
And musky melon ripening somewhere.
Again we stretch our limbs upon the bed
Where first our simple childish prayers were said;
And while, without, the gallant cricket trills
A challenge to the solemn whippoorwills,
And, filing on the chorus with his glee,
The katydid whets all the harmony
To feather-edge of incoherent song,
We drop asleep, and peacefully along
The current of our dreams we glide away
To the dim harbor of another day,
Where brown toil waits for us, and where labor
stands
To welcome us with rough and horny hands.

And who will mock the rude, unpolished ways
That swayed us in the good old-fashioned days
When labor wore the badge of manhood, set
Upon his tawny brow in pearls of sweat?

Who dares to-day to turn a scornful eye
On labor in his swarthy majesty?
Or wreathe about his lips the sneer of pride
Where brawny toil stands towering at his side?
By industry alone we gauge the worth
Of all the richer nations of the earth;
And side by side with honesty and toil
Prosperity walks round the furrowed soil
That belts the world, and o'er the ocean ledge
Tilts up the horn of plenty on its edge.
'Tis not the subject fawning to the king,
'Tis not the citizen, low cowering
Before the throne of state.—'Twas God's intent
Each man should be a king—a president;
And while through human veins the blood of pride
Shall ebb and flow in Labor's rolling tide,
The brow of toil shall wear the diadem,
And justice gleaming there, the central gem,
Shall radiate the time when we shall see
Each man rewarded as his works shall be.
Thank God for this bright promise! Lift the voice
Till all the waiting multitudes rejoice;
Reach out across the sea and clap your hands
Till voices waken out of foreign lands
To join the song, while listening Heaven waits
To roll an answering anthem through the gates.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 012 227 587 5